

Appendix

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE HARSHACHARITA.

Chap. I & II. After the usual invocation and sympathetic references to his great predecessors, Bāṇa gives us an account of his family and of himself which has been summarised in the Introduction (pp. II-IV) and need not be repeated here.

Chap. III. When Bāṇa returned from Harsha's court, he was pressed by his cousins with the request that he should entertain them with a narrative of the life and career of Harsha. Bāṇa expressed his inability to do even the slightest justice to the remarkable career of Harsha and said that he was ready to narrate to them only a portion of the brilliant career of Harsha. He then proceeded to narrate as follows. In the country of S'rikanṭha, there is a district named Sthāpvis'vara. In ages long past there reigned a king named Pushpabhūti. He was a great devotee of S'iva. He formed friendship with a great S'aivite teacher from the Deccan named Bhairavāchārya. The latter made a present of a wonderful sword named Atṭahāsa to the king. Pushpabhūti offered to help the S'aiva ascetic in a magic rite. While engaged in his task, he had a vision of Lakshmī, who promised him that he would be the founder of a mighty line of kings, one of whom Harsha would have a most glorious career.

Chap. IV. In Pushpabhūti's line, as time rolled on, was born Prabhākaravardhana alias Pratāpas'ila, who fought successfully against the Hūnas, the king of the Gūrjaras and the lords of Sindhu, Gāndhāra, Lāṭa and Mālava. His queen was Yas'omatī. The king was a great devotee of the sun. Rājyavardhana was the first child of the king and the queen. Then was born Harsha on the 12th of the dark half of the month of Jyeshtha. The birth of Harsha was heralded by auspicious signs prognosticating his future greatness. When Rājyavardhana was in his sixth year and Harsha was an infant just beginning to take a few steps with the help of his nurse and prattling a few indistinct words, a daughter named Rājyas'ri was born to the king and queen. About the time of the

birth of Rājyas'ri, queen Yas'omatī's brother handed over to the king Prabhākaravardhana his son Bhaṇḍin about eight years old as a companion to the two princes, between whom and Bhaṇḍin sprang up a close and intimate friendship. The king in course of time brought, as companions for the growing princes, two brothers, sons of the king of Mālava, named Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta, the elder Kumāragupta being about 18 years old at the time. These two followed the princes like their shadow. When Rājyas'ri grew up an accomplished princess she was married to Grahavarman, the eldest son of Avantivarman of the Maukhari family. Rājyas'ri went with her husband to his country of Kānyakubja.

Chap. V. When Rājyavardhana was old enough to bear arms, Prabhākaravardhana sent him accompanied by hereditary ministers and devoted feudatories to the north against the Hūnas. Harsha accompanied him for some distance and when Rājyavardhana entered the Kailāsa range, Harsha remained behind and devoted some time to hunting. A courier from Prabhākaravardhana announced his serious illness. He started in hot haste and riding day and night reached the capital on the third day. He saw the whole city given up to performing rites of various sects and faiths for the sake of his father. On entering the palace he found the king lying in the clutches of death with queen Yas'omatī weeping over him. Two days afterwards when the king's condition became hopeless, Yas'omatī ascended the funeral pyre and the king died a short time afterwards. Harsha performed the funeral rites and anxiously waited for the arrival of his elder brother to whom he had already despatched swift messengers.

Chap. VI. About a fortnight after the death of Prabhākaravardhana, Rājyavaradhana arrived wounded in his successful war against the Hūnas and with a thin growth of hair on his chin. The next day Rājyavardhana announced his intention of refusing the throne and of taking to a life in the forest. Harsha was taken aback by the strange resolve of his brother and had a mind to follow him, when one of Rājyas'ri's attendants, named Samvādaka, threw himself into the hall where the brothers sat and narrated a harrowing tale. He told Rājyavardhana that on the very day on which the news

of Prabhākaravardhana's death reached Kānyakubja (Kanoj), Grahavarman, the husband of Rājyas'rī, was slain by the king of Mālava, that Rājyas'rī was put into prison at Kānyakubja with fetters on her feet like a brigand's wife and that the king of Mālava had designs even against Sthānvis'vara. On that very day Rājyavardhana, who did not listen to Harsha's entreaties that, though a boy, he should be allowed to accompany him, started against the king of Mālava accompanied by Bhandin with ten thousand cavalry. After many days had elapsed, Harsha saw Kuntala, a high cavalry officer and a great favourite of Rājyavardhana, coming with sorrow written on his face. He brought the news that Rājyavardhana, though he subdued with ease the Mālava prince, was treacherously slain by the king of the Gaudas, who had induced Rājyavardhana to go alone to the former's place. Simhanāda, the old and faithful commander-in-chief of Prabhākaravardhana, encouraged Harsha to avenge his brother's death. Harsha took the vow of destroying the Gauda king and dictated to his minister for foreign affairs named Avanti a proclamation to be sent to all kings either to submit to Harsha or to offer battle. The next morning, Harsha called Skandagupta, the chief of his elephant hosts, and asked him to get ready his whole army for an expedition. Skandagupta applauded Harsha's project but implored his master to learn the lesson of distrust from the fate of Rājyavardhana and narrated for his master's edification the stories of numerous former kings that fell victims to treachery and intrigue.

Chap. VII. A few days afterwards Harsha crowned himself and set out on an auspicious day, after worshipping S'iva. The first halt was made not far from the capital (Thanesar) on the banks of the Sarasvatī. There the chief accountant of the village waited upon him with a golden seal marked with the emblem of the bull and requested Harsha to issue a charter. The next day Harsha marched on with his vast army. When the day's march was over, he gave audience to Hamsavega, a confidential messenger of Kumāra alias Bhāskaravarman, king of Prāgjyotisha (Assam). The messenger announced that the prince of Assam desired to form an undying friendship with Harsha and offered many wonderful presents, the chief of which was a miraculous parasol that

originally belonged to Varuṇa. At night Hamsavega informed Harsha how the parasol came into the possession of the kings of Assam. He traced the descent of Kumāra alias Bhāskaravarman from Naraka and mentioned that Kumāra was the great-great-grandson of Bhūti-varman, great-grandson of Chandramukhavarman, grandson of Sthitivarman and son of Susthiravarman alias Mṛigāṅka from his queen S'yāmādevī. Bhāskaravarman was a devotee of S'iva and desired the friendship of Harsha. Harsha was highly pleased with the king of Assam and sent back Hamsavega with numerous presents. Harsha then proceeded for several days against his enemy (the king of Gauda). On the way he met Bhaṇḍin who brought with him the booty wrested from the Mālava king by Rājyavardhana. He brought news that after Kānyakubja was seized by Gupta, Rājyas'rī escaped from prison and had betaken herself to the Vindhya forest. Harsha then asked Bhaṇḍin to march against the Gauda king and himself entered the Vindhya forest in search of his unlucky sister.

Chap. VIII. After roaming about in the forest for several days, he met Vyāghraketu, son of the Bhil chieftain S'arabhaketu, who presented to Harsha a young Bhil by name Nirghāta, the commander-in-chief of the Bhils. He informed the king of an ascetic named Divākaramitra who was a convert from Brahmanism to Buddhism. Harsha remembered him as the friend of Grahavarman from the latter's childhood. Harsha resting his right hand on the shoulder of Mādhavagupta went to the hermitage of Divākaramitra, where he saw the latter surrounded by pupils and students of various sects. Just then a Bhikshu came unexpectedly and informed his teacher Divākaramitra that a woman of noble birth was about to burn herself for grief in the neighbourhood. Harsha hastened with the Bhikshu leading the way and saw his sister ready to perish in fire. From his sister he learnt how she was helped out of prison by a noble named Gupta at the time of the tumult of the Gauda king in Kānyakubja, how she then heard of the death of Rājyavardhana, how she gave up food on hearing it, how she came to the Vindhya forest and how in despair she prepared to burn herself. Divākaramitra then made to Harsha a present of a necklace named Mandakini, brought by Nāgārjuna from the Nāgas in Pātāla and handed over to Sātavāhana, over-

lord of the Deccan. Rājyas'rī expressed to her brother her wish to put on the red robe. Harsha implored her to remain with him till he carried out his vow of destroying the Gauda king and requested Divākaramitra to be the spiritual adviser of his sister. He further said that after fulfilling his vow, he would himself assume the red robes along with his sister. When Divākaramitra acceded to the wishes of Harsha, the latter returned to his army encamped on the banks of the Ganges.

Here the narrative of Harsha's career comes to an end.

THE HARSHACARITA OF BĀṆABHATTA

Text of Uchehivāsas I-VIII

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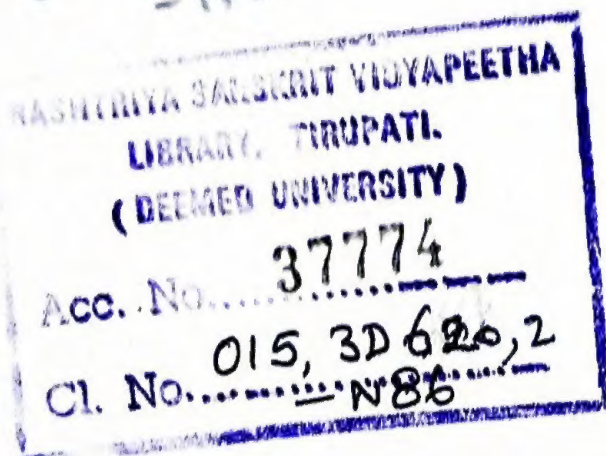
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Branches: Chowk, Varanasi 221 001

Ashok Rajpath, Patna 800 004

6 Appar Swamy Koil Street, Mylapore,
Madras 600 004

First Edition: Bombay, 1918

Reprint: Delhi, 1965, 1973, 1986

ISBN: 81-208-0032-x

ISBN: 81-208-0051-6

Printed in India by Narendra Prakash Jain at Shri Jainendra Press,
A-45 Naraina, Phase I, New Delhi 110 028 and published by
Shantilal Jain for Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 110 007.